

<p style="text-align: center;">Act 158 of 2005 Boilerplate Report Section 714</p>

Section 714 of enrolled Senate Bill 281, Act 158 of 2005 states the following:

Sec. 714. (1) The department, in cooperation with local transit agencies, shall work to ensure that demand-response services are provided throughout Michigan. The department shall continue to work with local units of government to address the unmet transit needs in Michigan. (2) The department shall report by March 1, 2006 on its efforts to implement this section over the past 2 years.

The Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) goal for transit service in Michigan is to work with the local units of government on developing and expanding service where there is local support and funding. Transit services in Michigan are planned, developed, implemented, and operated at the local level, and local support is essential. State funding and leadership are important, but local commitment is the critical first step needed to establish and maintain new transit services.

There are several different ways that MDOT has worked with local units of government to initiate or expand demand-response services.

- MDOT project managers are assigned to specific geographic areas of the state and are available - on a limited basis - to meet with local units of government to discuss options available to provide or expand demand-response services. In Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006, funding for MDOT's transit staff was reduced and as such remaining transit staff are focused on distribution and oversight of state and federal funding. Limited staff time is available to assist local agencies with expansion or enhancement of existing services. However, to the degree possible, MDOT staff continues to work with local agencies to encourage them to consider new or expanded service that, if successful, would be eligible for state assistance under the local bus operating program at some point in the future.

Some examples of where MDOT guidance and assistance has helped local governments add, expand, or consider new demand-response services within the past several years include:

- **Allegan County** - The county recently initiated county-wide demand-response services.
- **Benzie County** - The county is currently exploring options for initiating county-wide demand-response services.
- **Kalamazoo County** - Previously there were two transit agencies in the county, Kalamazoo County and the City of Kalamazoo. The two transit agencies merged in 2005 and a transit authority has now been formed. Efforts to improve and expand demand-response service county-wide are continuing.
- **North East Regional Ride** - The Thunder Bay Transportation Corporation (TBTC) in Alpena County completed a state funded three-year demonstration project to provide regional demand-response transportation services in a three county region of Alpena, Alpena, and Montmorency Counties. A transportation authority has now been formed and the demand-response transportation services are continuing in the three counties.

- **Straits Regional Ride** - The Cheboygan County Board of Commissioners completed a state funded three-year demonstration project to provide regional demand-response transportation services in a four county region, (Cheboygan, Emmet, Otsego and Presque Isle Counties). Although the demonstration project has ended, the demand-response transportation services are continuing.
- Prior to Fiscal Year 2005, MDOT had a Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF) supported program to provide grants to local agencies for coordination studies and demonstrations. These CTF grants have been used to study and demonstrate the effectiveness of new or expanded demand-response and fixed route services, specifically aimed at providing cross county transportation services. In many areas of the state, cross county coordination can be a key component of providing increased or enhanced demand-response service. Based on constrained CTF revenues, this program lost its state funding in FY2005 and was not restored in FY2006. However, there are still federal funds available for studies (but not demonstrations) to determine existing transit needs and options for providing expanded services either within the county or across county lines. Local funds are needed to match the federal funds. The following studies were funded in the last two years:
 - **Sanilac County** - The county is currently looking at coordinating the transportation providers in the county to improve the efficiency of the service and make service improvements to meet the needs of their customers.
 - **City of Battle Creek** - The city is conducting a comprehensive transit service analysis. The analysis will develop recommendations to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of public transit to the Battle Creek community. The recommendations may indicate that demand-response service be initiated within the city.
 - **Emmet County** - The county has recently completed a public transportation coordination plan. Currently there is limited demand-response service available within the county along with participation with the Straits Regional Ride system. The main goal of the project was to develop a plan to better coordinate existing public transportation providers and explore present and future needs.
 - **Marquette County** - The county will study existing and future public transportation needs including demand-response services. The study will include a review of current routes and schedules along with developing operating and capital cost projections to support any findings.

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